None of this really matters in terms of what the camera could have seen. I saw it, because I was watching from the porch next door. Instead of getting off the porch herself, Gladys told Collin to. They "escalated," to use mental health-care jargon. He slapped her face.

Gladys was shocked, and the police were useless. They became hostile when I wouldn't give them my date of birth. I hadn't done anything wrong except call them. I worked there. I lived next door. I'd been standing on my porch. I saw it all. "You live next door to this?" The bad cop demanded, as if I'd committed a series of crimes and that was the culmination.

When I wouldn't give them Collin's file the bad cop suggested I review my training. I considered suggesting that he review his own, especially the part under neighborhood policing. Instead I said I was sorry but, according to my training, for reasons of confidentiality I couldn't release the tenant's file without a "Form 14." They knew that. The good cop looked worried for his colleague, as if he thought he'd lost face and didn't know where he'd recover it.

Out of reach of the non-recording cameras I talked to Collin about what had happened. He said he guessed he'd really messed up this time. Now he'd never get to go home.

The police joined us a few minutes later. The bad cop